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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [OSCE](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#) [MD](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE/TRANSNISTRIA: FM TARASYUK'S FRUSTRATION
WITH RUSSIAN SUPPORT TO TRANSNISTRIA

REF: KIEV 1913

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Sheila Gwaltney for reasons 1.4
(b,d).

11. (C) Summary: In a May 22 meeting with EUR DAS Kramer, Foreign Minister Tarasyuk said Russia was reinforcing Transnistrian leader Smirnov's resistance to procedures required under the Ukraine-Moldova customs agreement. Furthermore, the Russians were refusing to agree to join a five-plus-two meeting as long as the Ukraine-Moldova customs agreement was in force; Tarasyuk appealed for U.S. assistance in getting Russia to drop this linkage. OSCE Chairman in Office/Belgian Foreign Minister de Gucht was planning to visit Moldova and Tiraspol, then arrive in Ukraine June 1. End summary.

12. (U) EUR DAS David Kramer and Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk touched on Transnistria during a May 22 meeting before a U.S.-GUAM bilateral meeting later that day. Second Territorial Department Director Anatoliy Ponomarenko and U.S.A. and Canada Desk Acting Chief Yuriy Nykytiuk sat in on the Ukrainian side. DCM and PolOff accompanied Kramer.

USG supportive on Transnistria issue

13. (C) DAS Kramer thanked Tarasyuk for Ukraine's leadership in resolving the thorny issue of the breakaway Moldovan region of Transnistria. He looked forward to working with Deputy Foreign Minister Andriy Veselovsky, who had assumed responsibility for Transnistria from special negotiator Dmytro Tkach and with whom Kramer would share an early morning flight to Brussels May 24. Kramer praised Ukraine's action in implementing a customs agreement with Moldova, a step that he characterized as "absolutely the right thing to do."

14. (C) Tarasyuk expressed gratitude for U.S. and EU support to Ukraine. He complained that Moscow was abetting Transnistrian leader Igor Smirnov's resistance to Moldovan government registration of Transnistrian business enterprises, as required by the Ukraine-Moldova customs procedures. (See also reftel reporting former National Security and Defense Council Secretary Anatoliy Kinakh's similar comments.) Lack of Moldovan registration was creating a problem for major Transnistrian producers, such as the metallurgical plant in Ribnitsa. Transnistrian business persons were becoming increasingly dissatisfied, with friction growing between Smirnov and a group led by Transnistrian Assembly leader ("speaker") Yevgeny Shevchuk. Russia was applying pressure on Moldova by implementing steps such as its ban on imports of Moldovan wine. (Note: The media later reported that the plant, Ribnitsa Steel, otherwise known as Moldova Metallurgical Plant, obtained Moldovan government registration. Another major firm, Electromash, also obtained temporary registration.)

15. (C) On May 18, Tarasyuk continued, he had met with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on the margins of a Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg. Lavrov still "dreamed" that Ukraine would suspend its implementation of the customs agreement, but Tarasyuk said he had stressed to Lavrov that there were no grounds for such hopes. Moscow appeared intent on holding the five-plus-two negotiations on Transnistria hostage by not agreeing to participate in five-plus-two while the customs agreement was in force. Tarasyuk urged the USG to use its influence to have Russia drop this linkage. At the same time, Ukrainian officials were pushing the Moldovan government to legitimate the process of Transnistrian privatizations.

16. (C) Tarasyuk said OSCE Chairman in Office/Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht was scheduled to visit Moldova, including Transnistria, and Kiev. Tarasyuk had suggested meeting de Gucht on Ukraine's border with Moldova/Transnistria, then proceeding together to Odesa to link up with Moldovan Foreign Minister Stratan before flying from Odesa to Kiev.

17. (C) Kramer said resolution of the issue of Moldovan farmers' access to their farms in Dubossary had been a welcome development. He agreed that pressure was mounting against Smirnov, both for his response to the Ukraine-Moldova customs agreement and for his foolish decree prohibiting foreign financing of NGOs. Kramer again praised Ukraine's role with respect to Transnistria and noted that, while Russian and Ukraine alone had the potential to change the status quo in Transnistria, only Ukraine had followed through on its commitments.

KIEV 00002065 002 OF 002

18. (U) DAS Kramer did not review this cable.

19. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
Gwaltney